

CLAIMS

1. A method of applying a sender-specific mail policy, the method comprising:
 - 5 maintaining a list of computer system users and associated sender-specific mail policies;
 - receiving a mail message intended for further transmission, the mail message indicating a sender thereof;
 - attempting to verify a digital signature in said mail
 - 10 message;
 - if the mail message does contain a verified digital signature, and if a user corresponding to the verified digital signature corresponds to the sender indicated in the mail message, applying an associated sender-specific
 - 15 mail policy to said mail message; and
 - if the outgoing mail message does not contain a verified digital signature corresponding to the sender indicated in the mail message, applying a default mail policy to said mail message.
- 20
2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of applying a sender-specific mail policy to said mail message comprises determining whether the mail message complies with said policy;
 - 25 if the mail message does comply with said policy, allowing transmission of said message; and
 - if the mail message does not comply with said policy, applying appropriate measures to said message.
- 30
3. A method as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the step of applying a default mail policy to said mail message comprises determining whether the mail message complies with said policy;
 - 35 if the mail message does comply with said policy, allowing transmission of said message; and

if the mail message does not comply with said policy, applying appropriate measures to said message.

4. A method as claimed in claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein said 5 default mail policy is more restrictive than said sender-specific mail policy.

5. A method as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the step 10 of applying a default mail policy to said mail message comprises rejecting said mail message.

6. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, comprising receiving the mail message in a boundary agent, the mail message being intended for further transmission over an 15 external computer network.

7. A computer program product, comprising code for performing the method as claimed in claim 1.

20 8. A method of applying a sender-specific mail policy, for use in a boundary agent of a first computer network, the method comprising:

25 (a) maintaining a list of users of said first computer network, and sender-specific mail policies associated with said users;

(b) receiving from a user of said first computer network a mail message intended for further transmission over a second computer network, the mail message indicating a sender thereof;

30 (c1) determining whether said mail message contains a digital signature, and, if so

(c2) attempting to verify the digital signature; and

(d) if the mail message does contain a verified digital signature, and if a user corresponding to the verified 35 digital signature corresponds to the sender indicated in

the mail message, applying to said mail message a sender-specific mail policy associated with said user.

9. A method as claimed in claim 8, further comprising:
 - 5 if the outgoing mail message does not contain a verified digital signature corresponding to the sender indicated in the mail message, applying a default mail policy to said mail message.
10. 10. A local computer network, comprising:
 - a plurality of user computers; and
 - a mail server;
 - and having a connection to a second computer network, such that outgoing mail messages can be sent from the user
 - 15 computers to destination computers connected to the second computer network, and such that incoming mail messages can be sent to the user computers from transmitting computers connected to the second computer network,
 - wherein the mail server maintains a list of users of
 - 20 said user computers and associated sender-specific mail policies;
 - wherein, when said mail server receives an outgoing mail message, said outgoing mail message indicating a sender thereof, said mail server attempts to verify a
 - 25 digital signature in said outgoing mail message; and
 - if the mail message does contain a verified digital signature, and if a user corresponding to the verified digital signature corresponds to the sender indicated in the mail message, said mail server applies an associated
 - 30 sender-specific mail policy to said mail message.
11. A local computer network as claimed in claim 10, wherein, if the outgoing mail message does not contain a verified digital signature corresponding to the sender indicated in the mail message, said mail server applies a default mail policy to said mail message.

12. A local computer network as claimed in claim 10,
wherein, when said mail server determines whether the
outgoing mail message complies with said sender-specific
5 mail policy:

if the outgoing mail message does comply with said
sender-specific mail policy, said mail server allows
transmission of said message; and

10 if the outgoing mail message does not comply with said
sender-specific mail policy, said mail server applies
appropriate measures to said message.

13. A local computer network as claimed in claim 10,
wherein, when said mail server determines whether the
15 outgoing mail message complies with said default mail
policy:

if the outgoing mail message does comply with said
default policy, said mail server allows transmission of
said message; and

20 if the outgoing mail message does not comply with said
default policy, said mail server applies appropriate
measures to said message.

14. A local computer network as claimed in claim 10,
25 wherein said default mail policy is more restrictive than
said sender-specific mail policy.

15. A local computer network as claimed in claim 10,
wherein said default mail policy is to reject said mail
30 message.

16. A computer program product, for use on a mail server in
a local computer network, said local computer network
further comprising:

35 a plurality of user computers; and having a connection
to a second computer network, such that outgoing mail

messages can be sent from the user computers to destination computers connected to the second computer network, and such that incoming mail messages can be sent to the user computers from transmitting computers connected to the 5 second computer network,

wherein said computer program product causes the mail server to maintain a list of users of said user computers and associated sender-specific mail policies;

wherein, when said mail server receives an outgoing 10 mail message, said outgoing mail message indicating a sender thereof, said computer program product causes said mail server to attempt to verify a digital signature in said outgoing mail message; and

if the mail message does contain a verified digital 15 signature, and if a user corresponding to the verified digital signature corresponds to the sender indicated in the mail message, said computer program product causes said mail server to apply an associated sender-specific mail policy to said mail message.